

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) testified Thursday before a House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity in support of a bill he filed that will aid veterans and their families.

The Education Assistance to Realign New Eligibilities for Dependents – or the EARNED Act (H.R. 3577) expands the number of veterans who can transfer their educational benefits to their dependent family members. “Our troops have earned this and their families have sacrificed their way of life and often careers of their own to move around the world, base to base, country to country,” said Congressman Rodriguez. “These families deserve the ability to receive unused benefits and this is the right thing to do.”

Congressman Harry Teague (NM-2), who co-sponsored the bill with Rodriguez, said “When a service member is deployed, their family is in a sense deployed with them and endures the many challenges that go along with their service. Our veterans are absolutely entitled to share these benefits with their families if they so choose.”

The bill’s other co-sponsors include Bob Filner (CA-51), John Hall (NY-19) and Jim McGovern (MA-3). The bill, introduced on September 15, allows a veteran who retired from the service between September 11, 2001 through July 31, 2009 with at least 20 years of active duty military service to transfer his or her educational benefits to dependents. While an existing G.I. Bill already permitted this transfer of benefits to those who are on active duty as of August 1, 2009, it failed to allow veterans who qualify for the Post 9-11 GI Bill but retired with at least 20 years of service before August 1, 2009 to do the same.

This bill will fill that need. Now, these veterans, who have already given so much, will be able to help their families achieve educational success.

#